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Statement RE: Concealed Weapons

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – The twelve year battle to win the right to carry concealed weapons for Missourians continued last week as the state Supreme Court heard arguments about whether or not concealed weapons are constitutional.

Last year my fellow legislators and I successfully passed the override for the concealed weapons bill, protecting Missourians' rights to keep and bear arms. The law allows Missourians age 23 and older to receive concealed gum permits after passing background checks and completing a firearms training course.

A lawsuit was filed claiming that the Missouri constitutions prohibits people from carrying concealed guns. St. Louis Court Judge Steven Ohmer blocked the law on Oct. 10, one day before its effective date, on grounds it violated the constitution.

I am confident that the Supreme Court will overturn Judge Ohmer's injunction, and uphold the law.

A recent decision by the New Mexico Supreme Court could also boost our credibility and cause for concealed guns in our state, and influence the outcome of the lawsuit.

New Mexico's Supreme Court decided two weeks ago that its concealed carry law did not violate that state's constitution. The Missouri Supreme Court heard arguments last week on whether a state law allowing most adults to carry hidden guns violates the state constitution.

Although a decision by one state's supreme court is not binding elsewhere, state courts often look outside their jurisdictions to see how other judges are interpreting similar laws under similar circumstances.

I believe that concealed weapons are protected by our constitution, and support Missourians' right to carry. It is time that the citizens of Missouri are allowed to carry concealed weapons, a right protected under the Missouri Constitution.

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